

# PRRC COURSE CATALOG

## SUMMER 2021

June 28, 2021 – September 17, 2021

Presented by VA Video Connect ONLY

### ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT TO LIFE

Serenity increases when we have the wisdom to accept the difficult things in life we cannot change and the commitment to change the ones we can. This class teaches skills from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) to help you **A**cept your experience and be present in your life, **C**hoose the Value that mean the most to you, and **T**ake action to live more fully.

### ARTLAB

Work on self-determined art projects in this art productivity class to: 1) Take action steps toward full citizenship and community integration through the creative arts; 2) Visualize and actualize recovery goals through artistic expression; 3) Improve physical stamina, manual dexterity and task-focused cognitive/affective processing; 4) Improve social skills by discussing and planning community integration around shared interests of class members; 5) Reduce stigma and isolation.

### BLUEPRINT FOR RECOVERY (WRAP)

This class is designed to guide you through the development of a Wellness Recovery Action Plan, or WRAP. This is a plan that assists in your mental health recovery, helps you get well and stay well, and identifies the life you want. It can also be useful when you are confronted with other stressful situations as well. You may not complete the entire plan in these sessions, and you will be encouraged to work on it at home, with other staff, and/or natural supports.

### CIVIC PARTICIPATION

This class will use elements of positive psychology, WRAP, and other techniques to focus on opportunities to have a political voice. Instruction and discussion of civics, media literacy and critical thinking will be included. All political points of view will be respected. The object is to be clear and effective in presenting your views to others. Benefits and challenges of political empowerment and acting as a group will be discussed, as will implications for Veterans as a group and the differences between political expression in military and civilian contexts.

### COACH YOURSELF

You may not know it, but you're a **coach** and you've been coaching yourself since you can remember. In this class, you'll learn how to *be your own coach* so you can make sustainable changes and take more ownership of your life, health, and recovery. Practical self-coaching techniques we'll cover include identifying and prioritizing your goals, understanding the obstacles to your goals, identifying effective strategies for change, building a plan for change, and mastering tools for accountability and support.

### COGNITIVE SKILLS TRAINING

Do you have trouble paying attention or concentrating? Planning and organizing? Learning and remembering? Do any of these problems get in the way of doing what you want or need to do? This class will focus on improving thinking skills like concentration, attention, memory, planning, organization, and problem-solving. Each session, students will practice skills to improve these areas and learn new ways of "working around"

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thinking difficulties. Improving these skills may help you to perform better in everyday activities and reach your goals.

#### COPING WITH ANXIETY

In this class, we will learn a variety of tools that may help you feel more comfortable in social situations. This class is based on cognitive behavioral therapy, or CBT, which has been shown to be effective in overcoming many types of problems, including those related to social anxiety. You can expect to take an active role in this class, and to practice the new skills you learn between sessions.

#### COPING WITH VOICES & PARANOIA

Do you struggle with hearing voices, feeling suspicious or paranoid, or having unusual, distressing thoughts? In this class, we will learn a variety of tools that may help you reduce these types of stressful experiences and improve your life satisfaction. This class is based on cognitive behavioral therapy, or CBT, which has been shown to be effective in overcoming many types of problems, including those related to hearing voices and feeling suspicious or paranoid. CBT can help you achieve your goals by looking at relationships between what you think, how you feel, and what you do. You can expect to take an active role in this class, and to practice the new skills you learn between sessions.

#### DUAL RECOVERY

This class is offered on Monday morning at 9AM for a reason. It is designed for *any* Veteran who is looking to make positive changes to their 'relationship' with drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or other addictions. We like to start the week off with a reminder that we are whole people, with strengths, and interesting personal histories, *and* we are dealing with issues related to substance use and mental health square on. You will learn more about addiction, relapse prevention, and how to make the changes you see fit. Most importantly hear from other Veterans and know you are not alone. We welcome people wanting abstinence as well as those practicing harm reduction.

#### ENDING SELF-STIGMA

This class uses a structured approach to help you stamp out the effects of stigma and reclaim your life story. Sometimes we can hold ourselves back from working toward the life we want. Self-stigma is when we start to believe the unfair negative myths about people who live with mental health challenges. Left unchallenged, self-stigma can be harmful. We will fight it together in this class with facts, skills, and the power of re-narrating our own life stories.

#### FOOD & FITNESS

This program will provide you with information, skills and motivation so you can be successful in creating a healthier life. You will learn the effects of being overweight on both physical and mental health; some you may be aware of and others you may not know. This is a chance not only to learn why and how to get healthy, but to actually **DO IT!** People who have taken this class lose an average of **8 pounds!** So, come join us in developing healthful habits while having fun.

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#### HEALTH FORUM

Do you want to feel better and be in control of your health? Then this forum is for you! Registration is not required, attend when we are discussing a topic you find important to your health! Topics include: heart health, diabetes, obesity, cancer (colorectal, lung, prostate, skin), prevention and treatment of common infectious diseases, how to make the most of doctor visits, and any other topics that participants feel would be important to explore and discuss. Calendar of topics will be available in advance.

#### MINDFULNESS

This class is an educational program using mindfulness, breathing, and meditation to enhance your ability to cope with stress. You will learn to deal with stress as it is happening by practicing meditations during the class and on your own between class sessions. You will receive weekly handouts to assist with home practice. Handouts include introductory information, frequently asked questions, and journal exercises to help build your own personal practice of meditation for stress.

#### RECOVERY IN YOUNG ADULTHOOD

This class will address common issues among young adult Veterans (approximately 21-40 years old), such as readjusting to civilian life, going to school, getting a job, managing family/relationships, and pursuing life goals. It will introduce coping strategies for managing obstacles to goals, including psychosis and other mental health problems (like depression, PTSD, and substance use). This class will help you learn tools to understand and overcome these challenges, while you move forward with your life and pursue your recovery goals. This group will be open to all young adult Veterans (including those not enrolled in the PRRC program). We will sometimes meet at various destinations in the community, as agreed upon by class members, to encourage social connection and community integration. Please join us!

#### RECREATION RECON

Learn about virtual and in-person activities in the Bay Area and beyond to support a sober lifestyle and engage in your community. Explore opportunities to stay occupied and involved. This class will also discuss some of the challenges of resuming social role after COVID. Join your fellow PRRC Veterans in learning and sharing resources to keep busy and motivated!

#### SEEKING SANCTUARY

When a person experiences trauma and losses in their life, often the foundations of their beliefs and values are shattered. This can result in 'moral injury or distress' in the inner being or soul. This class deals with such issues such as the difference between spirituality and religion, and such emotions as guilt, shame, anger, resentment, pain and suffering, loneliness, and despair. Practical tools are presented and discussed to deal and cope with these emotions, to facilitate renewal and healing.

#### SELF-COMPASSION

Are you hard on yourself when you make a mistake or struggle in life? Do you beat yourself up when things don't go the way you'd hoped? Most of us feel compassion when a close friend is having a hard time. What would it be like to offer that same caring attention to yourself, especially when you are struggling? To have the

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strength to stand up to harm, including the harm that we cause to ourselves through self-criticism and self-judgment? Research shows that self-compassion is associated with lower levels of anxiety and depression, stronger coping with life challenges, emotional well-being, healthy habits like diet and exercise, and more satisfying personal relationships. In the *Self-Compassion* class, you will learn how to understand the benefits of self-compassion, practice self-compassion in daily life, motivate yourself with kindness rather than criticism, handle difficult emotions with greater ease, and identify obstacles to self-compassion and strategies for overcoming them.

#### SKILLFUL EMOTIONS

Do you frequently experience overwhelming emotion? Do you go from great happiness to intense sadness to overwhelming anger without seeing clearly why? Do these unpredictable emotional changes affect your relationships? This class will cover these concepts and introduce coping skills and approaches to better manage our emotional life and relationships, using Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT). Using real life examples related to your goals and behaviors, we will work to apply mindfulness, emotion regulation, interpersonal effectiveness, and distress tolerance skills more effectively. Active participation in and outside of class will be essential to help feel more skillful, confident, and effective in managing emotions and cultivating healthy relationships.

#### SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING

This class is based on a well-researched model of social skills training. The class provides an easy and fun way to learn about and practice expressive, receptive, and conversational skills involved in human relationships. The group focuses on training skills in the following areas: Conversation, Assertiveness, Conflict Management, Communal Living, Friendship and Dating, Health Maintenance, Work, and Coping Skills for Drug and Alcohol Use.

#### SOUNDS OF RECOVERY

This class, related to the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), focuses on developing the use of music as a coping skill and daily maintenance tool. Specifically, by including music in your WRAP Wellness Toolkit and Daily Maintenance Plan, you will practice ways to use music as a recovery tool in your everyday life.

#### STORY CORPS

Writers of all levels are welcome to attend the *Veterans Story Corps*. In this class, you will work on a variety of recovery-oriented writing exercises to increase self-awareness and reduce tension while also increasing language arts and communication skills. There will be opportunities to explore prompts including journaling, expressive writing, poetry, non-fiction, playwriting, and short stories about real topics relevant to your current challenges or personal goals. You are invited to practice storytelling skills and share writing with peers to gain support and further reflection. Anyone -- from beginner to expert -- is welcome to come and try their hand at *Story Corps*!

#### WOMEN CREATE

Female Veterans will be invited to discuss, share, visualize and actualize recovery goals through discussion of recovery concepts and through active creative expression. This class will encourage you to share aspirations and

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unique methods of creativity such as visual art, writing, and performing. As well as encourage mindfulness and support healthy social involvement through the discussion of shared interests.